

Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 1 111 936 A2

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
27.06.2001 Bulletin 2001/26

(51) Int Cl.7: H04N 9/78

(21) Application number: 00311358.6

(22) Date of filing: 19.12.2000

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE TR
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

(72) Inventors:
• Renner, Karl
Dallas, Texas 75231 (US)
• Chang, Weider Peter
Hurst, Texas 76054 (US)
• Demmer, Walter
90411 Nürnberg (DE)

(30) Priority: 21.12.1999 US 467953

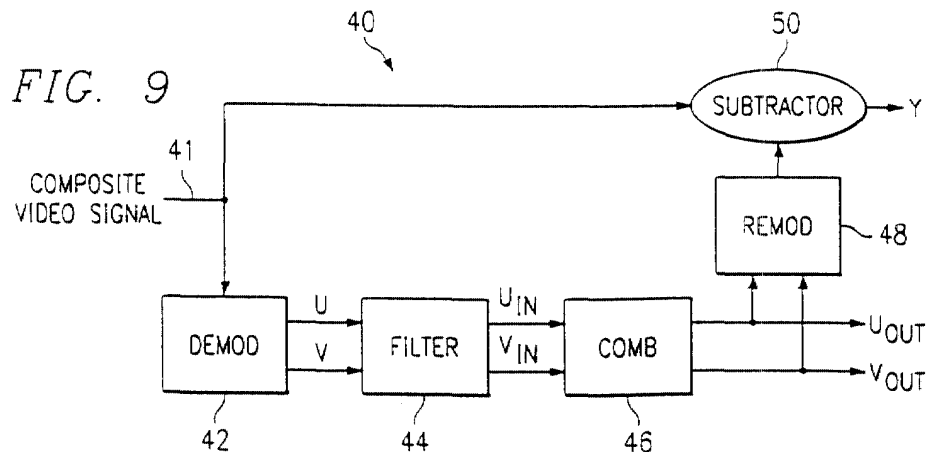
(71) Applicant: Texas Instruments Incorporated
Dallas, Texas 75251 (US)

(74) Representative: Potter, Julian Mark
D. Young & Co.,
21 New Fetter Lane
London EC4A 1DA (GB)

(54) Adaptive color comb filter

(57) A color comb filter (46), video decoder (40) and method for separating chroma (U,V) and luma (Y) signals from a composite video signal (41). The comb filter (46) includes circuitry (48) for generating color filter selections for filtering a chroma video signal (41) and control logic (62) for determining the filter selections based

on color boundary properties of the chroma video signal (U,V). The video decoder (40) includes a comb filter (46), a demodulator (42), low pass filter (44), a remodulator (48) and a subtractor (50). The filtered, remodulated chroma signal (U_{out} , V_{out}) is subtracted from the composite video signal (41) to produce a luma signal absent hanging dots and false colors.



EP 1 111 936 A2

Description

[0001] This invention relates generally to the field of television, and more particularly, but not exclusively, to a system and method of separating luminance and chrominance signals from a composite video signal.

[0002] A television (TV) operates by displaying video images in response to a composite video signal received from a TV station or Video Cassette Recorder (VCR), for example. The composite video signal comprises both luminance (luma) and chrominance (chroma) information. The luma portion contains the black-and-white TV signal information, and the chroma portion contains the color TV signal information.

[0003] There are two standards for video signals commonly in use today, one being the National Television Standards Committee (NTSC) which is used in the United States and Japan. An ideal frequency spectrum for luma (Y) and chroma (C) information in a composite NTSC video signal is shown in Figure 1a. In NTSC, the chroma phase shift is 180 degrees between the same pixel or two consecutive lines. Another standard for video signals is Phase Alternating Lines (PAL), used in Europe. An ideal frequency spectrum for luma (Y) and chroma (C) information in a composite PAL video signal is shown in Figure 1b. In PAL, the chroma phase shift is approximately 270 degrees from line to line. Vertical and horizontal synchronization signals also occupy the lower portion of the frequency spectrum in both standards, not shown.

[0004] In the NTSC standard, the chroma signal is added to the composite video signal by superimposing a 3.579545 MHz sine wave onto the standard black and white (luma) signal. After the horizontal sync pulse, 9 cycles of a 3.579545 MHz sine wave are added as a color burst. Following these 9 cycles, a phase shift in the chrominance signal indicates the color to display. The amplitude of the signal determines the saturation. A black and white TV filters out and ignores the chrominance signal, whereas a color TV separates the chrominance signal out of the composite video signal and decodes it, along with the normal intensity signal, to determine how to modulate the three color beams of the TV set.

[0005] When received by a color TV set, the composite video signal is typically input to a video decoder, which separates the luma and chroma information, and applies gain and offset factors to them in order to map them to a standard output range. A problem arises from luma Y frequencies that fall near the chroma subcarrier frequency f_{sc} : false color can be demodulated and output from the video decoder. This problem can be seen around sharp contours in text characters and horizontal and diagonal lines. Another problem that can occur is hanging dots where two different colors are adjacent to one another horizontally.

[0006] The applicant has recognised a need for a device and method for eliminating false colors and hanging dots in video signals to produce a clearer TV image.

[0007] Viewed from a first aspect the present invention achieves technical advantages as an adaptive comb filter and method of separating chroma from a composite video signal to provide a luma signal having no false colors and hanging dots. Color boundaries of the composite video signal are analyzed to select an optimal comb filter. The comb filter outputs are generated by averaging the pixels from the current line with corresponding pixels from previous lines. False color is distinguished and cancelled by averaging the selected successive lines.

[0008] In one embodiment, disclosed is a color comb filter including circuitry for generating color filter selections for filtering a chroma video signal, and control logic adapted to determine the filter selections. The filter selections are determined based on color boundary properties of the chroma video signal to reduce or preferably eliminate hanging dots and false colors problematic in the prior art.

[0009] In another embodiment, disclosed is a video decoder having a demodulator adapted to separate a chroma signal from a composite video signal, a comb filter coupled to the demodulator adapted to filter the chroma signal based on color boundary properties of the chroma signal, and a subtractor coupled to the comb filter. The filtered chroma signal is subtracted from the composite video signal to produce a luma signal absent of hanging dots and false colors of the prior art.

[0010] Also disclosed is a method of separating luma and chroma signals from a composite video signal, including the steps of demodulating the composite video signal to generate a chroma signal, low pass filtering the chroma signal to remove first and second harmonics from the chroma signal, and color comb filtering the chroma signal based on color boundary properties of the composite video signal. The filtered chroma signal is remodulated and then subtracted from the composite video signal to produce a luma signal.

[0011] An embodiment of the present invention is advantageous in providing an adaptive comb filter capable of filtering chroma from a composite video signal to produce a luma signal absent false colors and hanging dots problematic in the prior art. The present comb filter may be used in both NTSC and PAL video systems, whereas prior art comb filters were typically designed for one particular standard. False color may be distinguished and cancelled by averaging successive lines. Color boundaries within a 3x3 pixel window are recognized and a 2-line or delayed chroma input is selected such that hanging dot artifacts do not occur. An embodiment of the invention has user-programmable modes of operation, which include the choice of two different three line comb filter coefficients and the choice of a 2-line or no comb when a color boundary is present. An embodiment of the present invention also has programmable thresholds, which affect color boundary detection.

[0012] Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, and with reference to the drawings, which form an integral part of the specification and are to be read in conjunction therewith:

Figure 1a illustrates an ideal frequency spectrum for luma (Y) and chroma (C) information in a composite NTSC video signal;

Figure 1b illustrates an ideal frequency spectrum for luma (Y) and chroma (C) information in a composite PAL video signal;

Figure 2a shows a prior art vertical line pattern with false colors;

Figure 2b shows a prior art NTSC circle pattern having false colors;

Figure 2c shows a prior art PAL circle pattern having false colors;

Figure 2d shows a prior art PAL circle pattern with an incorrect comb filter applied having false colors;

Figure 2e shows a color bar pattern with a hanging dot effect evident where different colors meet horizontally;

Figure 3a illustrates a typical power spectrum of a composite NTSC video signal;

Figure 3b shows details of a typical power spectrum of composite NTSC video signal in the vicinity of color sub-carrier frequency;

Figure 3c shows more details of luma/chroma interlaced frequency spectrum for NTSC;

Figure 4 shows the frequency spectrum for PAL;

Figure 5 shows false color demodulation on two consecutive lines for NTSC;

Figure 6 shows false color demodulation on three consecutive lines for PAL;

Figure 7 illustrates transfer function characteristics of a 2-line comb filter for NTSC used in an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 8 shows transfer function characteristics of two 3-line comb filters used in an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 9 shows a block diagram of a video decoder utilizing the adaptive comb filter of an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 10 illustrates a frequency spectrum of video signal at the color low pass filter output;

Figure 11 illustrates a schematic of a preferred embodiment of the present comb filter architecture;

Figure 12 shows a selection of comb filters based on position of the local window and standard;

Figure 13 illustrates false color vectors for successive lines;

Figure 14 shows vertical test lines with the use of the present comb filter having no false color; and

Figure 15 shows a color bar pattern with the use of the present comb filter, without a hanging dot effect evident where different colors meet.

[0013] Like numerals and symbols are employed in different figures to designate similar components in various views unless otherwise indicated.

[0014] In prior art analog TV's, separation of luminance and chrominance components from the composite video signal was achieved by a chroma notch and a chroma bandpass filter, respectively. As both filters operate in horizontal direction only, necessitating a rather crude selectivity, the entire frequency band utilized for chroma had to be suppressed in the luminance channel, and vice versa, resulting in severe limitations of luminance bandwidth. Due to limited selectivity properties, this prior art approach resulted in "false colors" being shown on black and white images.

[0015] With the introduction of line stores, or line delays, vertical filters became feasible, too. Such vertical filters possess a frequency characteristic that resembles a comb structure and hence, they became known as comb filters. Dependent on coefficients, these comb filters are characterized by repetitive spectral maxima at integer multiples of the line frequency interleaved by minima at odd integer multiples of half the line frequency, and vice versa. For typical spectra of the composite NTSC signal, where the spectral energy of the luminance signal is mainly concentrated around integer multiples of the line frequency with the spectrum of the chrominance signal interleaved half way, comb filters established a considerable bandwidth improvement over the combination of chroma notch and chroma bandpass filters.

[0016] Originally in the PAL system, vertical filters were utilized for reducing or eliminating the decoder's sensitivity to "differential phase" and "differential gain" errors. Separation of the luminance and the chrominance components was still achieved by means of horizontal filters (chroma bandpass and chroma notch). With the introduction of digital video signal processing principles, utilization of the vastly increased selectivity properties of vertical filters (comb filters) was exploited for separation of luminance and chrominance components occupying the same range of frequencies, too. Yet, the advantages of these comb filters in terms of increased luminance bandwidth as well as a reduction of certain "false colors" is partially counterbalanced by introduction of a new artifact that has become known as the "hanging dot" effect. These "hanging dots" occur at vertical color transitions, or horizontal color edges, and are a manifestation of insufficient suppression, or worse, amplification of the color sub-carrier frequency under the condition of colors changing in the vertical direction. Thus, prior art comb filters are ineffective when imagerial contours deviate from straight vertical edges, and at horizontal (colored) edges, turning out chrominance for luminance and vice versa.

[0017] Introduced as adaptive comb filters, several solutions have become known in prior art to spatially (locally) reduce the hanging dot effect by means of a combination of horizontal and vertical (comb) filters controlled by spatial image properties. These prior art solutions are similar in that they are either applied to the composite video signal or to both of its components, individually.

5 [0018] Another prior art solution to solving the hanging dot effect is the use of temporal filters. However, temporal filters are not a viable solution because they require large, expensive frame stores. Furthermore, a temporal filter solution is principally plagued by motion artifacts, or contours that have changed position between two successive frames.

10 [0019] Utilizing the complementary nature of the luminance and the chrominance components, an embodiment of the present invention comprises a novel control mechanism for an adaptive comb filter and a novel remodulation scheme for chrominance resulting in optimal separation of luminance and chrominance. The suppression of hanging dots is achieved at the maximally achievable bandwidth for both luma and chroma components with no motion artifacts.

[0020] Figures 2a-2e are prior art video images illustrating false color and hanging dot problems of the prior art. Figure 2a shows a prior art vertical line pattern with a series of red vertical lines 10 that appear in the image interspersed with the black and white lines. The luma frequencies vary in horizontal direction only. The red lines 10 are false color: the black and white image should only contain black and white colors. Figure 2b shows a prior art NTSC circle pattern having false colors that appear as areas 12 of concentric rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, repeat) circles. The luma frequencies vary in different angular orientations in a circular test pattern. Figure 2c shows a prior art PAL circle pattern having areas 14 with red and green concentric circles and areas 16 with violet concentric circles. Areas 14 and 16 are false colors. Figure 2d shows a prior art PAL circle pattern with an incorrect comb filter applied having the red and green circles 14 and violet circles 16 of Figure 2c, plus more false colors 18 which comprise elliptical regions of horizontal red, green and violet lines. As in Figure 2a, Figures 2b-2d should appear as black and white images without any other colors visible. Figure 2e illustrates a color bar pattern with a hanging dot effect evident where different colors meet horizontally. For example, color green 20 adjacent color magenta 22 is separated by a series of hanging dots 24. Advantageously, the false colors and hanging dots shown in Figures 2a-2e are reduced and preferably eliminated by the use of an embodiment of the present invention.

[0021] Figures 3a-c illustrate a more detailed view of the video signal frequency spectrum for the NTSC standard. Figure 3a illustrates a typical power spectrum of a composite NTSC video signal. Figure 3b shows details of a typical power spectrum of composite NTSC video signal in the vicinity of color sub-carrier frequency. Figure 3c shows more details of luma/chroma interlaced frequency spectrum for NTSC, with U and V being the color or chroma components. A line spectrum is apparent where the spectral energy of the luma Y occurs at integer multiples of the line frequency (15734 Hz for NTSC). The spectral peaks for chroma C are interlaced between the peaks of luma Y and fall halfway between the luma Y peaks.

35 [0022] The PAL standard has the frequency spectrum shown in Figure 4 where luma Y is spaced at integer multiples of f_{H} . Due to the frequency relationship between the color subcarrier and the horizontal frequency [$f_{\text{sc}} = (283.75 + 1/625) * f_{\text{H}}$], the chroma U component is positioned about a quarter of a line from the luma Y component. Due to the phase alternation of the chroma V component, the V component is spectrally spaced a half line from the chroma U component in PAL.

40 [0023] The composite video signal is usually demodulated to produce two color difference signals (U and V). Colors can be defined on a vector diagram where U and V represent the axes. The vector diagram rotates at a frequency corresponding to the color subcarrier frequency.

[0024] Figure 5 shows false color demodulation in NTSC represented by the dot 26 on two consecutive lines. Projections onto the U and V axes represent the respective components. The chroma phase shift is 180 degrees between the same pixel on two consecutive lines. The frequency and phase of the false color is assumed to not change from line n to n+1. For NTSC, a two-line comb filter can be used at the output of the low-pass filter to eliminate the false color by averaging the color from lines n and n+1.

45 [0025] Figure 6 illustrates false color demodulation on three consecutive lines for PAL, where the chroma phase shifts by about 270 degrees (270.576°) from line to line, with false color 28, 30 demodulated. This means that a three-line comb must be used in which lines n and n+2 must be averaged to eliminate false color 28. The false color 30 decoded on line n+1 is not valid data.

50 [0026] One embodiment of the present invention adaptively selects the optimal type of comb filter based on properties of the composite video signal. The transfer function characteristics of the types of comb filters used in this embodiment of the present invention are shown in Figures 7 and 8. The comb filters are applied to the composite video signal to filter out the chroma while passing the luma. The transfer function characteristics 32 for a two-line comb filter is shown in Figure 6, with the filter coefficients shown in parentheses. The two-line comb ($1/2 \ 1/2$) has the filter transfer function: $1/2 + 1/2 * z^{-1}$ where z^{-1} corresponds to a delay of one horizontal line (sampling frequency= $f_{\text{H}}=15734.27$ Hz for NTSC). The two-line comb filter rejects frequencies halfway between integer multiples of f_{H} . Figure 8 illustrates two three-line comb filters. The first transfer function 34 having the coefficients ($1/2 \ 0 \ 1/2$) serves to eliminate the chroma U and V

components and pass luma Y. The second transfer function 36 having the coefficients ($\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{4}$) can be used for both NTSC and PAL though it does not completely eliminate the PAL chroma components.

[0027] Figure 9 shows a block diagram of a video decoder 40 including an adaptive comb filter 46 in accordance with the present invention. A composite video signal 41 is input to a demodulator 42, which separates the two chroma U and V components. The demodulator 42 is coupled to a filter 44 that comprises a low pass filter. The filter 44 is adapted to remove the first and second harmonics of the color subcarrier frequency. The signals at the output of the filter 44 are labeled U_{in} and V_{in} , as shown. The filter 44 is coupled to a comb filter 46, which output is labeled U_{out} and V_{out} . The comb filter 46 is coupled to a remodulator 48 which is coupled to a subtractor 50. The subtractor 50 is also coupled to the composite video signal 41.

[0028] The video decoder 40 utilizes a technique which remodulates the chroma U, V after it has been demodulated and subtracts it from the composite video input to generate luma Y which preserves its original frequency characteristics with no attenuation around the chroma subcarrier frequency f_{sc} . The video decoder 40 demodulates the chroma and generates two color difference signals (U and V) which are low pass filtered to remove the first and second harmonic of the color subcarrier frequency. The comb filter 46 in an embodiment of the present invention is applied to the output of the color low pass filter 44. Note that two comb filters 46 may be used, one each for U and V, but preferably only one comb filter 46 is included. Because signals U and V flow at $1/2$ pixel clock rate, they are preferably multiplexed so that only one comb filter 46 is required. The demodulation process involves multiplying the input composite video by the sine and cosine of the color subcarrier f_{sc} , which produces sum and difference of the input and local oscillator frequencies. The color low pass filter 44 filters out the sum frequency and passes the difference frequency. The comb 46 processes the output of the color low pass filter and feeds the U and V signals to the remodulator 48, which outputs remodulated chroma equal to $(U_{out}\sin\omega_{sc}t + V_{out}\cos\omega_{sc}t)$ to the subtractor 50, where $\omega_{sc} = 2\pi f_{sc}$. The subtractor 50 subtracts the remodulated chroma from the composite video signal 41 to produce luma Y.

[0029] Since for NTSC $f_{sc}=227.5f_h$ the frequency spectrum shifts by $0.5f_h$, as shown in Figure 10. Chroma U,V falls at integer multiples of f_h , with luma Y interlaced at integer plus half f_h frequency intervals. The 2-line comb of Figure 7 and the 3-line comb ($1/4 \ 1/2 \ 1/4$) of Figure 8 filter out the luma Y and passes the chroma U,V signals. For PAL, since $f_{sc}=283.75f_h$, the chroma shifts to integer and integer plus one half multiples of f_h while the luma shifts to integer plus one fourth and integer plus three fourths of f_h . The comb filter ($1/2 \ 0 \ 1/2$) of Figure 8 will pass the chroma U, V and trap the luma Y.

[0030] In the prior art, luma Y is separated from the composite video signal 41 by using a chroma trap filter which blocks the color subcarrier frequency f_{sc} . Unfortunately luma Y frequencies near the color frequency are attenuated which may result in a degraded picture resolution. To reduce and preferably prevent this, a better technique called chroma remodulation is utilized by the video decoder 40 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Demodulated chroma is low pass filtered to remove the first and second harmonics of the color subcarrier frequency and is then remodulated. This remodulated chroma is then subtracted from the composite video input 41 to cancel the chroma U,V and produce luma Y. This technique produces a very sharp picture with good resolution because the luma Y frequencies near the color frequency are not attenuated. A hazard exists when a color boundary occurs and the 2- or 3-line comb filter averages two different colors to produce a false color. If this false color is not eliminated properly then it can produce a hanging dot pattern in the luma output by the remodulation process.

[0031] A preferred architecture of the comb filter 46 of an embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 11. Circuit 48 is adapted to generate color filter selections for filtering the chroma video signal U_{in} or V_{in} . The outputs of circuit 48 are coupled to a multiplexer 60 that is controlled by control logic 62 which selects which color filter selections to output at U_{out} or V_{out} . The circuit 48 of the present comb filter 46 preferably comprises a plurality of line delays 68, 70 coupled to a plurality of multipliers 72, 74, 76, 78, 80 coupled to a plurality of adders 82, 84, 86, 88. The arrangement shown is preferred although other circuits may be utilized to produce the desired outputs comb23, comb123, comb12, comb13, and U_{in} or V_{in} delayed. These selection outputs are input to multiplexer 60 which outputs one selection to signal U_{out} and V_{out} according to the instructions provided by control logic 62, to be discussed further herein. Multipliers 72, 74, 76, 78, 80 preferably multiply the signal U_{in} or V_{in} by $1/2$. More preferably, multipliers 72, 74, 76, 78, 80 comprise right-shifting the data word by one bit. The line delays 68 and 70 preferably comprise a 10-bit wide shift register. The line delays 68 and 70 may alternately comprise a circular buffer memory although this may be more costly to implement.

[0032] The comb filter 46 is also adapted to produce a "same color" selection. Signals line2 and line1 are generated by line delays 68 and 70, respectively, as shown, which signals are input along with signal line3 to logic circuit 64. The output of logic circuit 64 is coupled to line delay 66, which preferably comprises a 1 bit wide register to generate the same color signal.

[0033] Chroma pixels within a local 3x3 window of the image are used by the adaptive comb filter control logic 62 to select a 2-line, 3-line, or no comb filtered output. Figure 12 shows a 3x3 window centered on the pixel of interest for different positions with respect to a color boundary. If a transition in the color is detected between line 1 and line 3 then a decision is made., based on the TV standard (NTSC or PAL). The color boundary in the horizontal dimension within the 3x3 window is detected by computing vertical and horizontal difference between the pixel colors. The pixel color

is represented by a vector consisting of its u and v component values. The computed difference values are shown in the following equations:

Eq. 1: lines 1&3: vertical difference 13 = mag ($u_{1b} - u_{3b}$, $v_{1b} - v_{3b}$)

Eq. 2: lines 1&2: vertical difference 12 = mag ($u_{1b} - u_{2e}$, $v_{1b} - v_{2e}$)

Eq. 3: lines 2&3: vertical difference 23 = mag($u_{1e} - u_{3h}$, $v_{1e} - v_{3h}$)

Eq. 4: line 2: horizontal difference = mag($u_{2a} - u_{2c}$, $v_{2a} - v_{2c}$)

The magnitude is computed using the following equation:

Eq. 5: $\text{mag}(x,y) = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}$

In order to avoid the computational complexity an approximation formula is preferably used for the magnitude.

Eq. 6: $\text{mag}(x,y) = \max(\max(\text{abs}(x), \text{abs}(y)),$

$\max(7/8*\text{abs}(x) + 1/2*\text{abs}(y), 0.5*\text{abs}(x) + 7/8*\text{abs}(y)))$

Additional parameters used in the boundary decision comprise the vector angle ϕ between the colors at line 1 pixel b and line 3 pixel b:

Eq. 7: $\cos \phi = (u_{1b} * u_{3b} + v_{1b} * v_{3b}) / \text{mag}(u_{1b}, v_{1b}) * \text{mag}(u_{3b}, v_{3b})$

The same_color parameter represents the color comparison results for the previous three lines. The criteria for detecting a color boundary in accordance with the present invention are listed in Table 1. The constants P, Q, Ra, Rb, Rc, and S are programmable

by the user. The column labeled "variable" is a Boolean variable which can be true or false as evaluated by the expression. The symbol "!" means inverse or "not".

Table 1

These parameters are combined in a Boolean expression to control comb filter selection:		
variable	represents	expression
E	strong boundary present	vertical difference 13 \geq P * horizontal difference + Q
H0a	boundary present	vertical difference 13 \geq Ra
H0b	boundary present	vertical difference 13 \geq Rb
H0c	weak boundary present	vertical difference 13 \geq Rc
H0d	vector angle small	$\cos \phi < S$
H1a	boundary present between lines 1&2	vertical difference 12 \geq Ra
H1b	boundary present between lines 1&2	vertical difference 12 \geq Rb
H2a	boundary present between lines 2&3	vertical difference 23 \geq Ra
H2b	boundary present between lines 2&3	vertical difference 23 \geq Rb
K	specifies boundary location	vertical difference 12 \geq vertical difference 23
same color	same color for previous 3 lines	(!H1b) and (! H2b) or ((same_color)and(!H2b))

Eq. 8: decision = E and /* strong boundary */

(H0a or (!H0a)and(H0c)and(H0d)) and/* boundary or weak boundary and small angle */

((!H1b) or (!H2b)) and /* no boundary between lines 1&2 or no boundary between lines 2&3) */

same_color /* same color for previous 3 lines */

[0034] The E parameter detects the presence of color boundaries having different orientations by comparing the vertical difference with the horizontal difference of pixels within the 3x3 window. The constant P sets the angular sensitivity and Q set an absolute threshold which defines a zone around the center pixel within which the comb is disabled. Table 2 illustrates E as a function of boundary angles.

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

	P=0	1	4	4
angle	Q=0	0	0	15
0	1	1	1	0
45	1	1	0	0
90	1	0	0	0
135	1	1	0	0
180	1	1	1	0
225	1	1	0	0
270	1	0	0	0
315	1	1	0	0

40 **[0035]** The thresholds Ra, Rb, and Rc are used to detect horizontal boundaries corresponding to the H0, H1, and H2 Boolean variables. K is used to locate a boundary which has been detected between lines 1 and 3. The same color variable represents the color history of the previous lines and is used to eliminate false color. S is a fractional number close to but less than 1. If the two colors are nearly the same then the vector angle ϕ will be close to zero and $\cos \phi$ will be close to 1. Table 3 lists the parameters for different positions of the 3x3 window in Figure 12 where a horizontal color boundary is present. Note that 1 means true and 0 false. H0=1 signals the presence of a color boundary and K specifies the location.

50

55

image line	E	H0 a b c d	H1 a b	H2 a b	same colo r	dec i- sio n	K	NTSC comb	PAL comb	color bounda ry
n	1	0 0 0 0	0 0	0 0	1	0	1	123	123	none
n+1	1	1 1 1 1	1 1	0 0	1	1	1	23	no	1 & 2
n+2	1	1 1 1 1	0 0	1 1	1	1	0	12	no	2 & 3
n+3	1	0 0 0 0	0 0	0 0	0	0	1	123	123	none

Table 3

[0036] The same color parameter keeps track of the color history for the previous lines and is used to eliminate false color in PAL. False color due to luma frequencies near the chroma frequency results in the vectors for successive lines 1,2,3, and 4 shown in Figure 13: the chroma u and v axes correspond to a fixed reference. For NTSC, the false color vector phase switches 180 degrees in phase from line to line, resulting in two vector positions. For PAL, the false color switches 270 degrees in phase from line to line, resulting in the center vector diagram before the PAL switch of the v component. The PAL after switch results in the two vector positions in the right vector diagram.

[0037] Table 4 illustrates the same color variable for NTSC. When false color occurs the decision is 0 due to H0a=0 as well as same color=0. Table 5 illustrates the false color case for PAL where there is a boundary between black and false color. When false color occurs, the decision is 0 due only to same color=0.

lin e	Col or	E	H0 a b c d	H1 a b	H2 a b	sam e col or	dec i- sio n	K	comb select	Comment
n	bla ck	1	0 0 0 0	0 0	0 0	1	0	1	123	average black for lines 123
n+1	bla ck	1	1 1 1 1	1 1	0 0	1	1	1	23	average black for lines 23
n+2	a	1	1 1 1 1	1 1	1 1	1	1	1	23	average black for lines 23
n+3	b	1	0 0 0 0	1 1	1 1	0	0	1	123	average false color for lines

										123
n+4	a	1	0 0 0 0	1 1	1 1	0	0	1	123	average false color for lines 123
n+5	b	1	0 0 0 0	1 1	1 1	0	0	1	123	average false color for lines 123

Table 4

line	color	E	H0 a b c d	H1 a b	H2 a b	sample color	K	comb selection	comment
n	black	1	0 0 0 0	0 0	0 0	1	1	123	average black for lines 123
n+ 1	black	1	1 1 1 1	1 1	0 0	1	1	23	average black for lines 23
n+ 2	a	1	1 1 1 1	0 0	1 1	1	0	delay	delayed input
n+ 3	a	1	1 1 1 1	1 1	0 0	0	1	1 3	average false color for lines 1,3
n+ 4	b	1	1 1 1 1	0 0	1 1	0	0	1 3	average false color for lines 1,3
n+ 5	b	1	1 1 1 1	1 1	0 0	0	1	1 3	average false color for lines 1,3

Table 5

[0038] Comb filter selection by control logic 62 is based on the decision and user programmed control bits according to the following Table 6. Comb mode bit 0 is used to specify the use of either a 2 line comb or the line delayed input which is useful for the

Table 6

comb mode 1	comb mode 0	decision	K	comb selection	description
x	0	0	0	23	boundary present-use comb23
x	0	0	1	12	boundary present-use comb12
x	1	0	X	in delayed	boundary present-use line delayed input
0	X	1	X	123	no boundary present use comb123
1	X	1	X	13	no boundary present use comb13

NTSC standard. Comb mode bit 1 specifies the use of either comb123 ($\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{4}$) or comb13 ($\frac{1}{2} 0 \frac{1}{2}$) which is particularly useful for the PAL standard.

[0039] Referring again to the comb filter architecture 46 in Figure 11, the comb filter outputs comb23, comb123, comb12, comb13, and Uin or Vin delayed are generated by averaging the pixels from the current line with the corre-

sponding pixels from previous lines; these are provided by buffers 68 and 70 having a delay equal to a line delay. Since the data rate of the chroma is decimated by a factor of two, the delay is actually one half the number of pixels per line. Same color is a 1 bit Boolean variable which represents the color history of previous lines.

[0040] Figure 14 shows a vertical line test pattern with the use of the adaptive comb filter 46. The image is absent the false color present in the prior art. Similar results are found for circle test patterns, not shown. Figure 15 shows a color bar test pattern using a comb filter 46 of an embodiment of the present invention. Note the absence of hanging dots at the adjacent horizontal areas 90 of different colors. Solving the false color and hanging dot problems of the prior art with an embodiment of the present invention results in a video image with crisp edges.

[0041] There are several advantages of the adaptive comb filter 46 of an embodiment of present invention. False color may be distinguished and cancelled by averaging optimally selected successive lines. Color boundaries within a 3x3 pixel window are recognized and a 2-line or delayed chroma input is selected such that hanging dot artifacts do not occur. An embodiment of the invention has user- programmable modes of operation, which include the choice of two different three line comb filter coefficients and the choice of a 2-line or no comb when a color boundary is present. Furthermore, an embodiment of the present invention has programmable thresholds which affect color boundary detection.

[0042] While this invention has been described with reference to illustrative embodiments, this description is not intended to be construed in a limiting sense. Various modifications and combinations of the illustrative embodiments, as well as other embodiments of the invention, will be apparent to persons skilled in the art upon reference to the description. It is therefore the intention that the appended claims be interpreted as broadly as possible in view of the prior art to include all such variations and modifications.

[0043] Insofar as embodiments of the invention described above are implementable, at least in part, using a software-controlled programmable processing device such as a Digital Signal Processor, microprocessor, other processing devices, data processing apparatus or computer system, it will be appreciated that a computer program for configuring a programmable device, apparatus or system to implement the foregoing described methods is envisaged as an aspect of the present invention. The computer program may be embodied as source code and undergo compilation for implementation on a processing device, apparatus or system, or may be embodied as object code, for example. The skilled person would readily understand that the term computer in its most general sense encompasses programmable devices such as referred to above, and data processing apparatus and computer systems.

[0044] Suitably, the computer program is stored on a carrier medium in machine or device readable form, for example in solid-state memory or magnetic memory such as disc or tape and the processing device utilises the program or a part thereof to configure it for operation. The computer program may be supplied from a remote source embodied in a communications medium such as an electronic signal, radio frequency carrier wave or optical carrier wave. Such carrier media are also envisaged as aspects of the present invention.

[0045] The scope of the present disclosure includes any novel feature or combination of features disclosed therein either explicitly or implicitly or any generalisation thereof irrespective of whether or not it relates to the claimed invention or mitigates any or all of the problems addressed by the present invention. The applicant hereby gives notice that new claims may be formulated to such features during the prosecution of this application or of any such further application derived therefrom. In particular, with reference to the appended claims, features from dependent claims may be combined with those of the independent claims and features from respective independent claims may be combined in any appropriate manner and not merely in the specific combinations enumerated in the claims.

Claims

1. A color comb filter, comprising:

circuitry for generating color filter selections for filtering a chroma video signal; and
control logic adapted to determine said filter selections, wherein said filter selections are optimally determined based on color boundary properties of said chroma video signal.

2. The color comb filter of Claim 1 further comprising a multiplexer coupled to said circuitry and said control logic, said multiplexer adapted to output chroma video signal from said color filter selections.

3. The color comb filter of claim 1 or 2, wherein said circuitry comprises a plurality of line delays coupled to a plurality of multipliers and a plurality of adders.

4. The color comb filter of any preceding claim, wherein said color filter selections are selected from the group consisting of:

comb23, comb123, comb 12, comb13 and chroma video signal delayed.

5. The color comb filter of any preceding claim, wherein pixels of successive lines of said chroma video signal are averaged to eliminate false color.

6. The color comb filter of any preceding claim, wherein said control logic comprises programmable thresholds affecting color boundary detection.

7. The color comb filter of any preceding claim, wherein both NTSC and PAL signals are filterable.

8. A video decoder, comprising:

a demodulator adapted to separate a chroma signal from a composite video signal;
a comb filter coupled to said demodulator adapted to filter said chroma signal based on color boundary properties of said chromal signal; and
a subtractor coupled to said comb filter, said subtractor adapted to subtract said filtered chroma signal from said composite video signal to produce a luma signal.

9. The video decoder of Claim 8 further comprising a remodulator coupled between said comb filter and said subtractor.

10. The video decoder of claim 8 or 9, further comprising a low pass filter coupled between said demodulator and said comb filter, said low pass filter adapted to remove first and second harmonics from said chroma signal.

11. The video decoder of Claim 10 wherein said comb filter comprises:

circuitry for generating color filter selections for filtering said chroma video signal ;
a multiplexer coupled to said circuitry adapted to produce an output chroma video signal from said color filter selections; and
control logic adapted to determine said filter selections and communicate said selections to said multiplexer, wherein said filter selections are determined based on color boundary properties of said chroma video signal.

12. The video decoder of any one of claims 8 to 11, wherein said comb filter circuitry comprises a plurality of line delays coupled to a plurality of multipliers and a plurality of adders.

13. The video decoder of any one of claim 8 to 12, wherein said color filter selections are selected from the group consisting of:

comb23, comb123, comb 12, comb13 and chroma video signal delayed.

14. The video decoder of any one of claims 8 to 13, wherein pixels of successive lines of said chroma video signal are averaged to eliminate false color.

15. The video decoder of any one of claims 8 to 14, wherein said control logic comprises programmable thresholds affecting color boundary detection.

16. The video decoder of any one of claims 8 to 15, wherein both NTSC and PAL signals are filterable.

17. A method of separating luma and chroma signals from a composite video signal, comprising the steps of:

demodulating said composite video signal to generate a chroma signal;
low pass filtering said chroma signal to remove first and second harmonics from said chroma signal;
color comb filtering said chroma signal based on color boundary properties of said composite video signal;
remodulating said filtered chroma signal; and
subtracting said filtered chroma signal from said composite video signal to produce a luma signal.

18. The method of Claim 17 wherein said step of color comb filtering comprises selecting color filter selections from the group consisting of:

comb23, comb123, comb 12, comb13 and chroma video signal delayed.

19. The method of Claim 17 wherein said step of color comb filtering comprises averaging pixels of successive lines of said chroma video signal to eliminate false color.

5 **20.** The method of Claim 17 wherein said step of color comb filtering comprises referring to preprogrammed thresholds affecting color boundary detection.

21. A computer program comprising computer- or machine-readable computer program elements for configuring a computer to implement the method of any one of claims 17 to 20.

10 **22.** A computer program comprising computer- or machine-readable computer program elements translatable for configuring a computer to implement the method of any one of claims 17 to 20.

23. A carrier medium carrying a computer program according to claim 21 or 22.

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

FIG. 1a
(PRIOR ART)

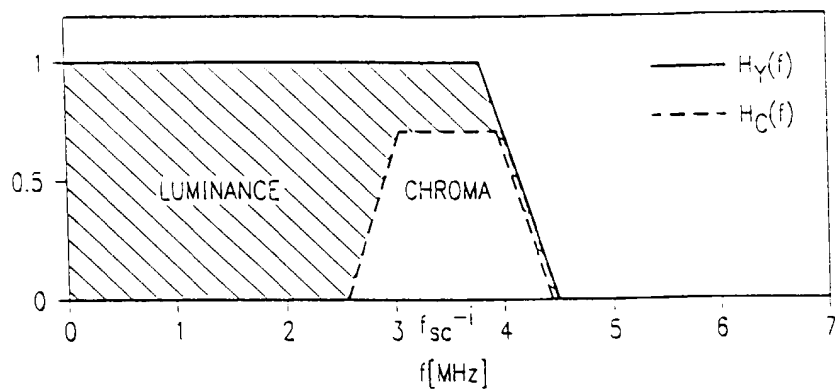


FIG. 1b
(PRIOR ART)

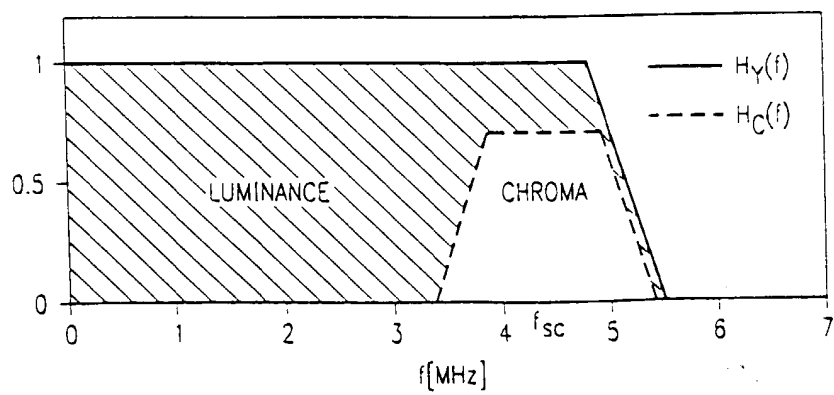


FIG. 2a
(PRIOR ART)

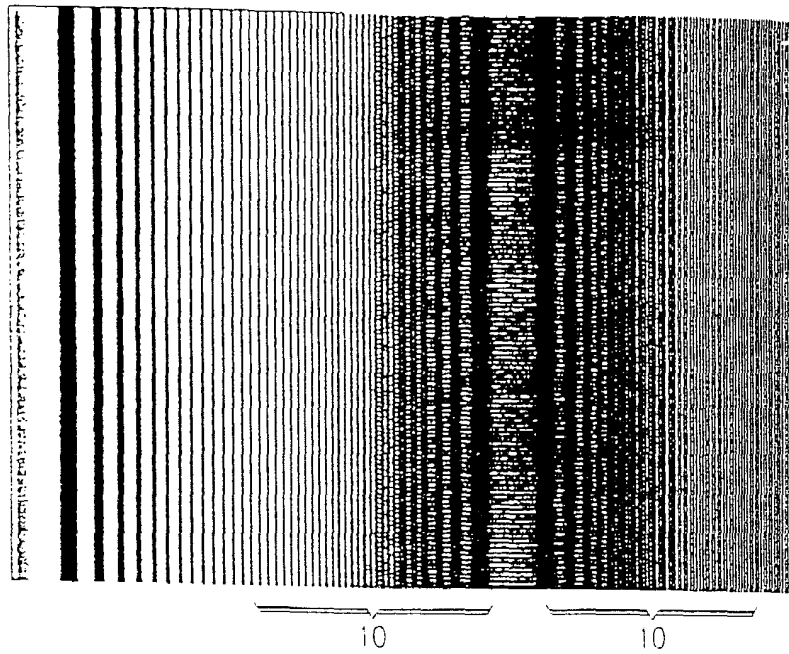


FIG. 2d
(PRIOR ART)

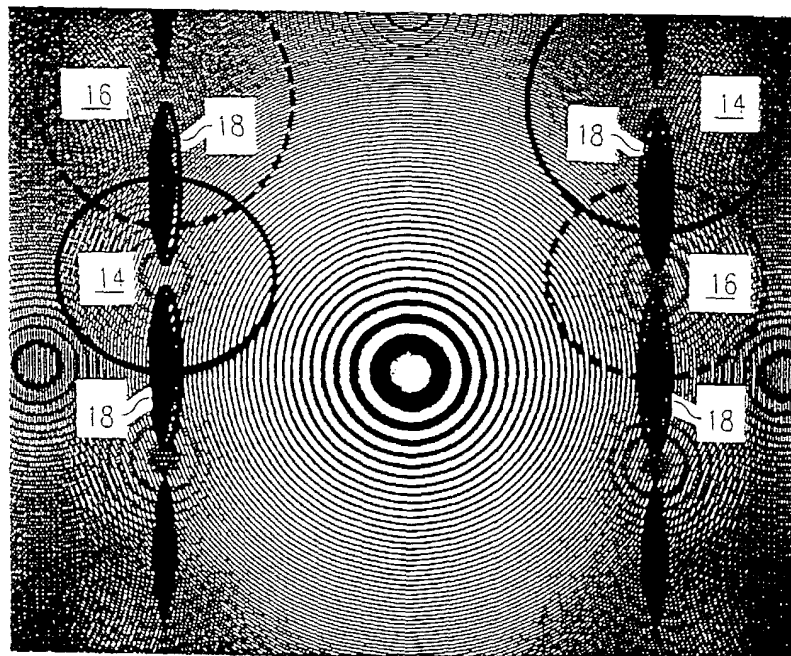


FIG. 2b
(PRIOR ART)

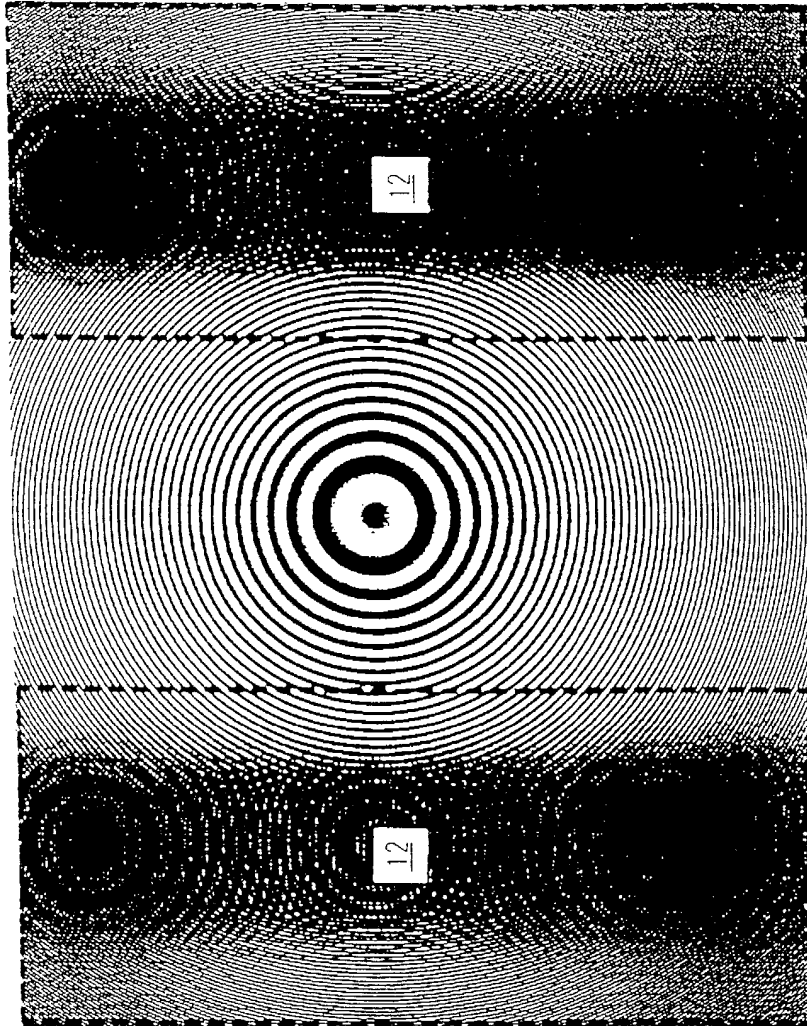


FIG. 2C
(PRIOR ART)

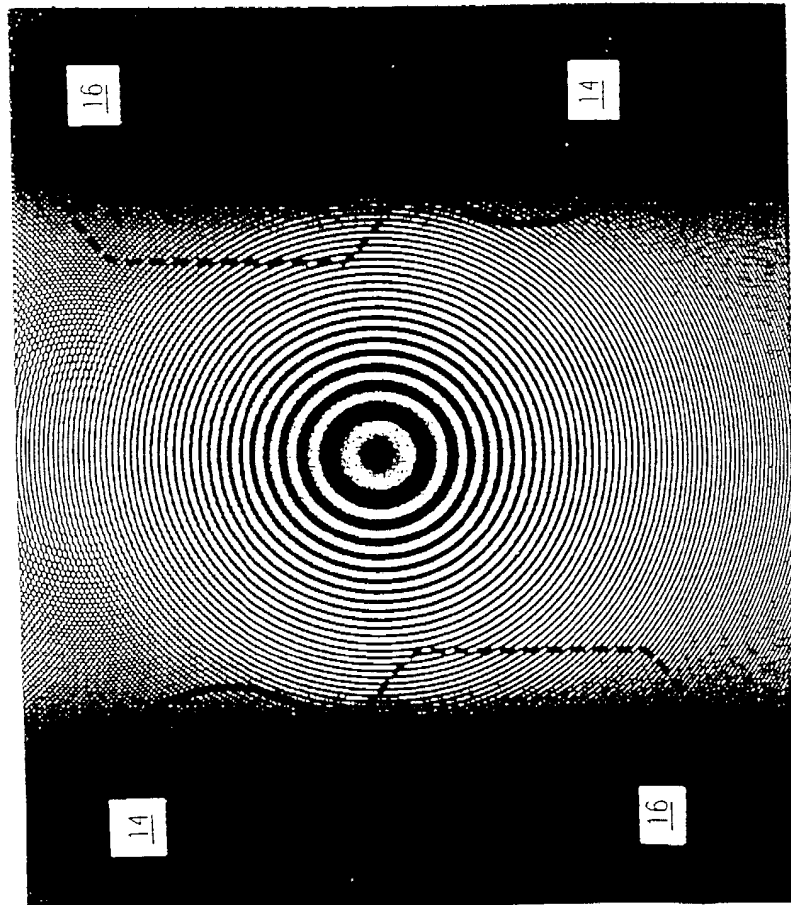


FIG. 2e
(PRIOR ART)

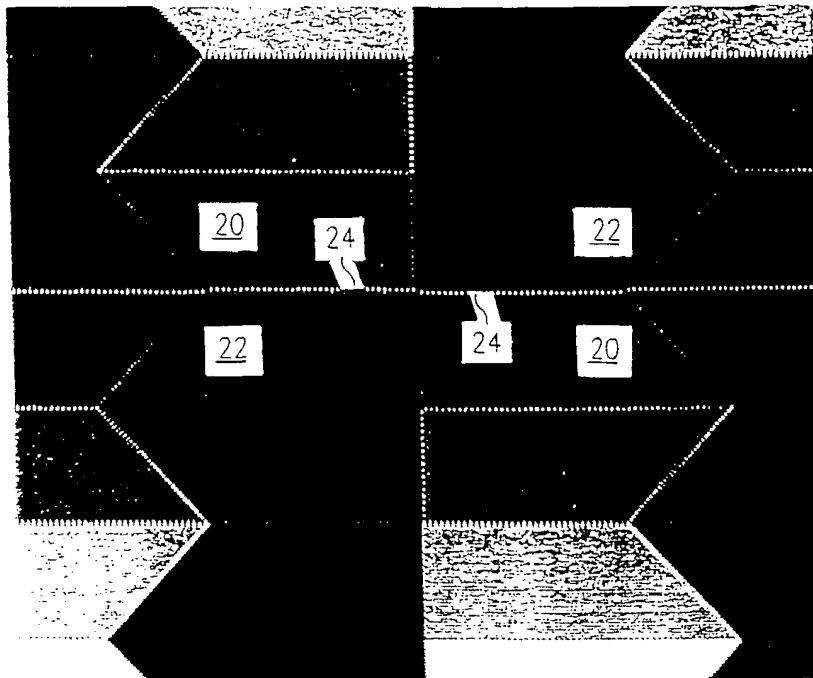


FIG. 3a
(PRIOR ART)

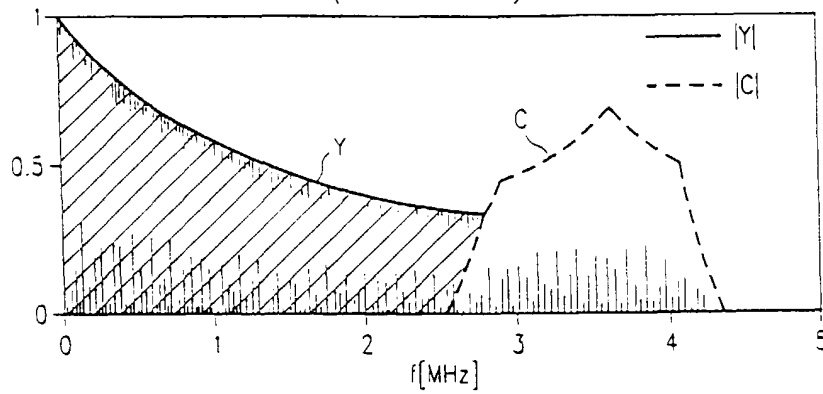


FIG. 3b
(PRIOR ART)

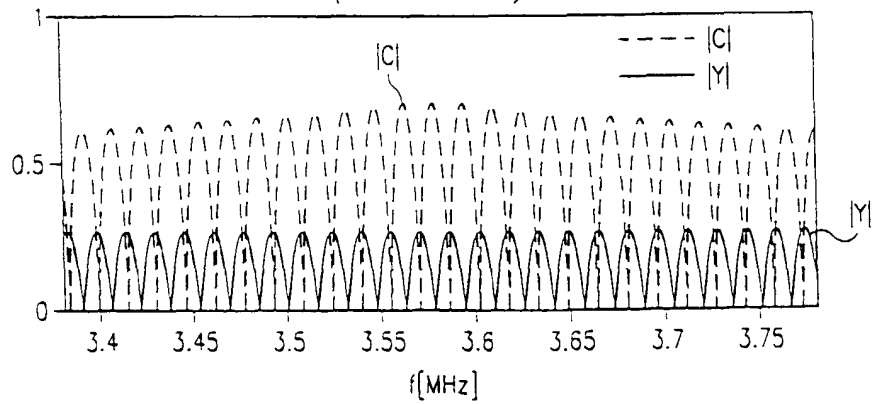
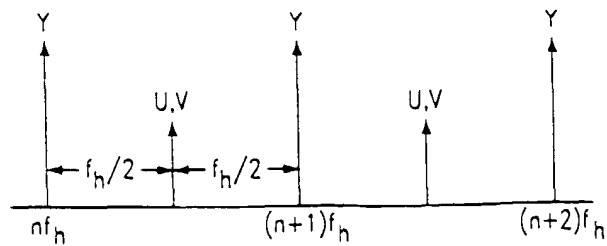


FIG. 3c
(PRIOR ART)



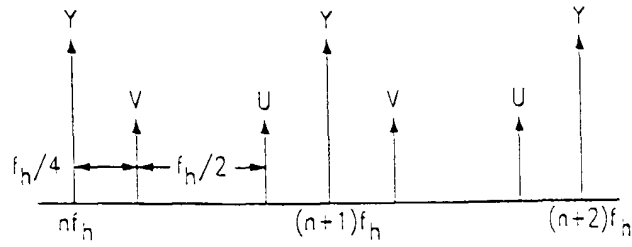


FIG. 4
(PRIOR ART)

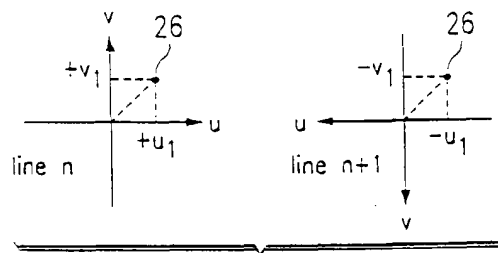


FIG. 5
(PRIOR ART)

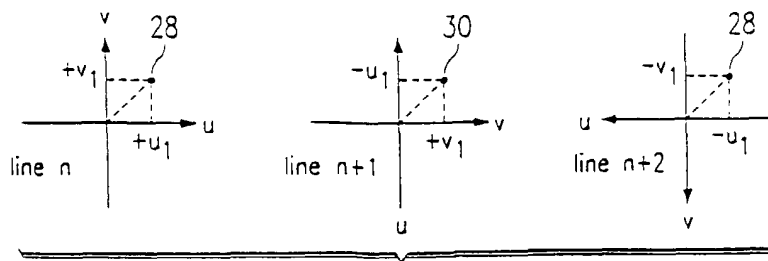


FIG. 6
(PRIOR ART)

FIG. 7

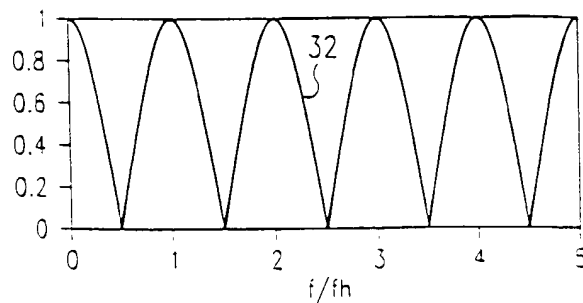


FIG. 8

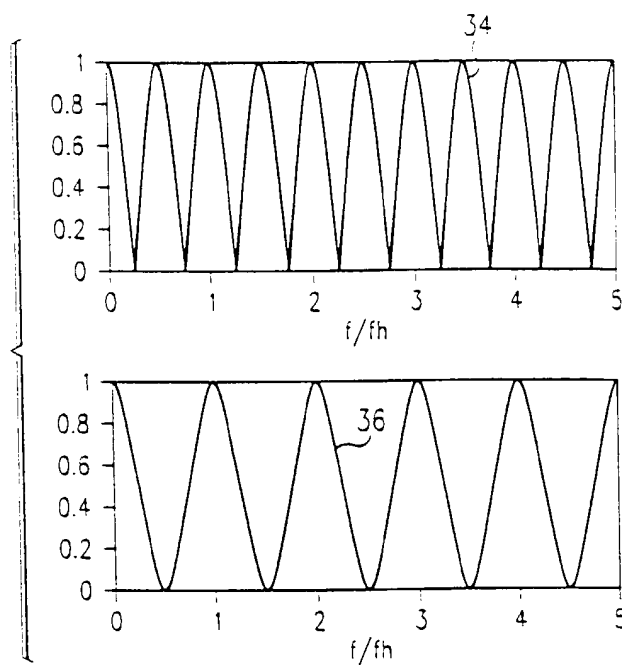
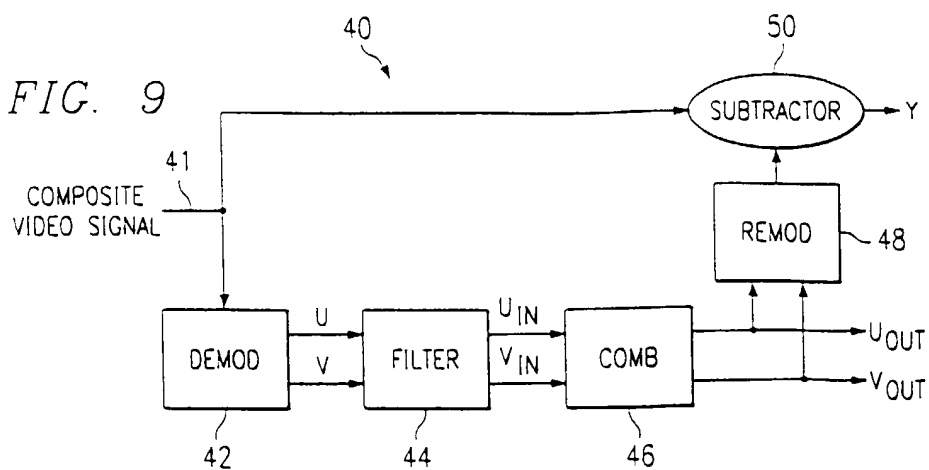


FIG. 9



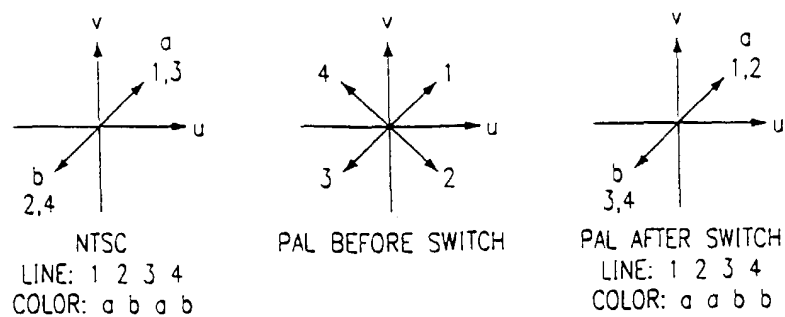
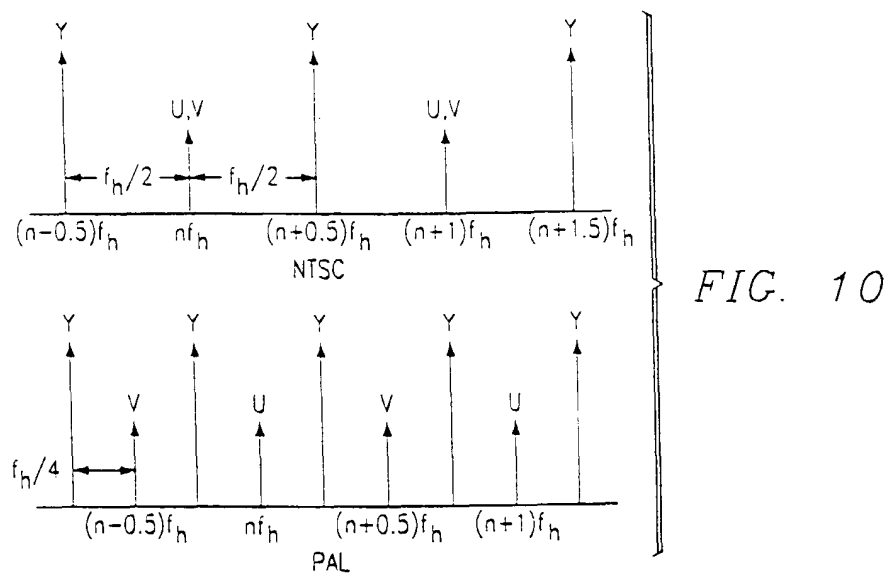


FIG. 13

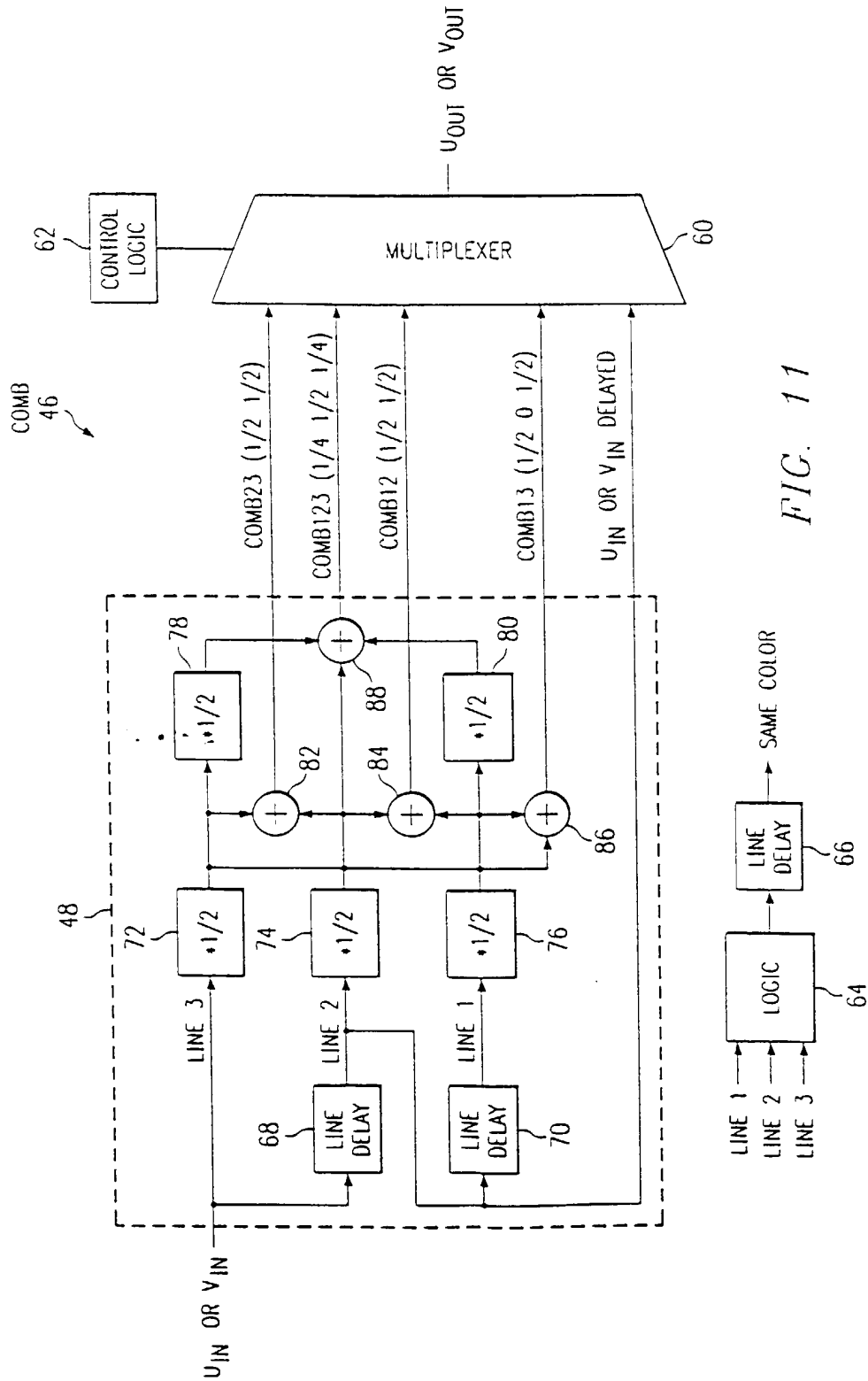


FIG. 12

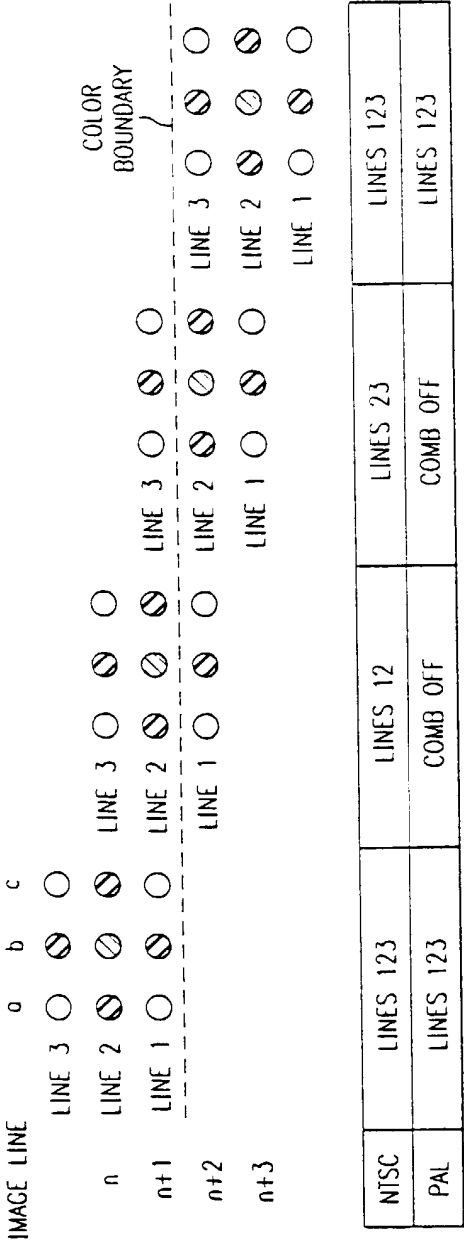


FIG. 14

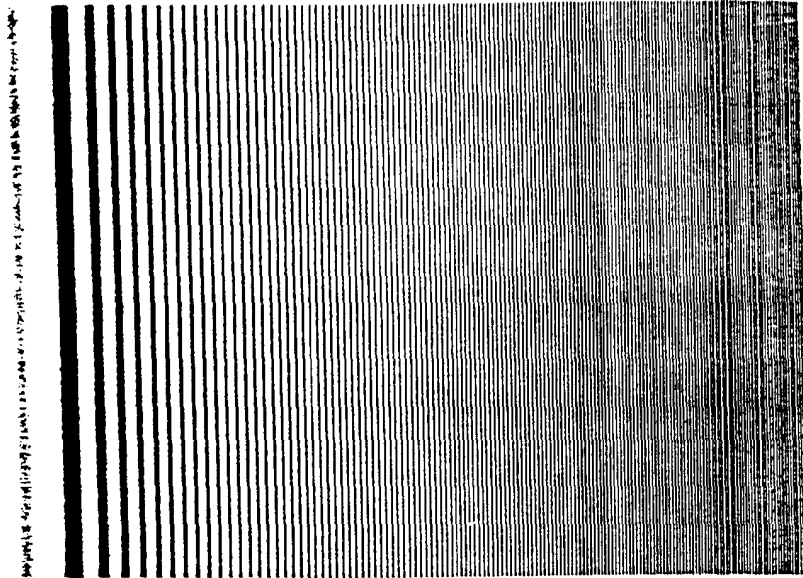


FIG. 15

